

Application No. 10/666,247

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 10-13, 16 and 18-20 remain pending. Claims 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 14, 15, 16 and 17 were cancelled, the subject matter being incorporated into amended independent claims 1 and 12. Method claim 20 was also amended and new claim 21 has been added.

The examiner rejected claims 1-3, 7-14 and 17-20 as being anticipated by Schneider (6,431,583); claims 1-3, 7-9, 11-14, 17, 19 and 20 by Lang et al (5,536,043); and claims 1-8, 10-16 and 18-20 by Keeler et al (5,344,184).

Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 12 wherein in claim 1 dependent claimed features of cancelled claims 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 were incorporated and in claim 12 dependent claimed features of cancelled claims 14, 15, 16 and 17 were added. As can be seen this combination was not anticipated by any of the references relied upon by the examiner and therefore applicants respectfully request these rejections be withdrawn. Similarly in the method claim the step of guiding and tethering has been added to render these rejections moot as well.

The examiner further rejected claims 1-8, 11-16, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meduovsky et al (6,846,015) in view of Schneider (6,431,583).

Applicants strongly disagree; the device employed in Meduovsky is a hydraulic cylinder using a magnetic responsive fluid energized by a magnetic field to change fluid viscosity requiring a coil to generate the required field. The cylinder and piston as best can be understood do not rely on a locking taper angle to stop the piston. Whereas applicants simple guide tube only requires the airbag to deploy to initiate movement and thus the guide tube is a simple sleeve adapted to retain the guide pin from separating and slow the impact force as the bolster approaches the location of the knees. This simple combination when viewed as a whole is neither taught nor suggested in the prior art. The use of a taper surfaces distributes the forces of the actuation of the airbag to

Application No. 10/666,247

smoothly retain the first member rather than abruptly stopping the bolster as noted in paragraph [0021]. The prior art neither teaches nor suggests this combination.

For the reasons stated above, applicants respectfully request the examiner to withdraw the rejections and allow the application to pass to issue.

Respectfully submitted,



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